

DEPARTMENT OF  
**WRITING STUDIES**  

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

# Graduate Student Handbook 2013-2014

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**Certificate in Technical Communication**

**M.S. in Scientific and Technical Communication**

**M.A. and Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Technical Communication**

Fall 2013

**The information in this handbook and other University catalogs, publications, or announcements is subject to change without notice. University offices can provide current information about possible changes.**

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This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Programs Administrator:  
Department of Writing Studies, 214 Nolte Center, 315 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, (612) 624-3445.

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its program, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

The University of Minnesota, founded in the belief that all people are enriched by understanding, is dedicated to the advancement of learning and the search for truth; to the sharing of this knowledge through education for a diverse community; and the application of this knowledge to benefit the people of the state, the nation, and the world.

The University's threefold mission of research and discovery, teaching and learning, and outreach and public service is carried out on multiple campuses and throughout the state.

**Please note:** Some of the College and Graduate Education policies and procedures are still being developed this year. Students and faculty will be notified of significant changes.

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## Welcome!

This handbook is intended for students currently enrolled in our department's Certificate, M.S., M.A., and Ph.D. programs. It does not contain information on admissions. (For admissions information, see <http://writingstudies.umn.edu/grad/> and select the degree you're interested in.)

Considerable effort has been taken to assure that the information in this handbook is accurate. But nothing in this handbook can supersede the rules and regulations of the Graduate School or other University of Minnesota bodies. Rules and regulations governing all graduate programs at the University of Minnesota are set forth in the Graduate School Catalog and at the Graduate School website.

The Writing Studies faculty is relatively large compared with that at many research- university departments. Our research and teaching interests range widely, from the core fields of rhetorical theory and history, and scientific and technical communication, to pedagogy, textual analysis and understanding, digital and multimedia communication, and the interaction of writing and its readers and its broader social and cultural contexts. The number of our graduate students is small, so you can receive close, individual attention from your advisor and others on the faculty.

## Graduate Programs Faculty and Staff

### Donald Ross

Director of Graduate Studies, M.A. & Ph.D.

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### Ann Hill Duin

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Graduate Programs Administrator

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## Graduate Faculty in RSTC / Role of the Degree Committee

### RSTC and S&TC Graduate Faculty

The following table lists all Writing Studies faculty eligible to chair and serve on M.A. or Ph.D. degree committees. They are all senior members unless indicated.

RSTC Senior Members or Senior Affiliate Members may chair M.A. and Ph.D. degree committees.

RSTC Members and Affiliate Members may chair M.A. degree committees, co-advise dissertations, and serve on Ph.D. degree committees.

#### Writing Studies Department Faculty

Carol Berkenkotter

Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch

Patrick Bruch

Ann Hill Duin

Richard Graff

Laura Gurak

Christina Haas

Kirsten Jamsen

Anne Lazaraton

John Logie

Tom Reynolds

Donald Ross, Jr.

Mary Schuster

Billie Wahlstrom

#### Also holds appointment in

Literacy and Rhetorical Studies (M)

Human Factors/Ergonomics (M)

Literacy & Rhetorical Studies (M)

Literacy & Rhetorical Studies (M)

No others

Communication Studies (ASM)

Literacy and Rhetorical Studies (M)

Classical and Near Eastern Studies (ASM)

Communication Studies (ASM)

English (AMA)

Literacy & Rhetorical Studies (M)

Studies of Science and Technology (M)

Literacy and Rhetorical Studies (M)

Literacy and Rhetorical Studies (AM)

English (AMA)

Literacy and Rhetorical Studies (M)

Liberal Studies (MA)

Literacy and Rhetorical Studies (M)

Literacy & Rhetorical Studies (M)

English (ASM)

Literacy and Rhetorical Studies (M)

Communication Studies (ASM)

Feminist Studies (AMA)

Feminist Studies (AMA)

SM (Senior Member), M (Member), MA (Member/Advising), AM (Affiliate Member), ASM (Affiliate Senior Member), AMA (Affiliate Member/Advising)

## Affiliate Faculty

Below are the Affiliate graduate faculty who hold appointments in our RSTC programs. They are ASM unless indicated. Their home department is listed, as well as additional appointments they hold.

	<b>Home department</b>	<b>Also holds appointment in</b>
<a href="#">Lisa Albrecht</a> (AM)	School of Social Work CEHD	American Studies Education, Curriculum & Instruction (M/A) Feminist Studies
<a href="#">Robert L. Brown, Jr.</a>	CSCL (Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature)	American Studies Comparative Literature Comparative Sts In Disc and Soc English Literacy & Rhetorical Studies
<a href="#">Karlyn Kohrs Campbell</a>	Communication Studies	Literacy and Rhetorical Studies Minor Feminist Studies (MA) Political Psychology (M) Feminist Studies (MA)
<a href="#">Shirley N. Garner</a> <a href="#">Ronald W. Greene</a> <a href="#">Alan G. Gross</a> (SM, S&TC)	English Communication Studies Communication Studies	American Studies Literacy & Rhetorical Studies Studies of Science and Technology (M) Human Factors/Ergonomics (M) Software Engineering (MA)
<a href="#">Joseph A. Konstan</a>	Computer Science	Feminist Studies Multicultural College Teaching and Learning Literacy & Rhetorical Studies
<a href="#">Amy Lee</a>	Postsecondary Teaching and Learning	Education American Studies Conservation Biology Development Studies and Social Change (M) Risk Analysis for Introduced Species and Genotypes (M) Studies of Science and Technology (M)
<a href="#">Cynthia Lewis</a> <a href="#">Daniel J. Philippon</a> (SM, S&TC)	Curriculum & Instruction English (M)	Literacy & Rhetorical Studies Education, Curriculum & Instruction (MA) Literacy & Rhetorical Studies
<a href="#">Geoffrey Sirc</a> <a href="#">Elaine E. Tarone</a>	English ILES-Ling/Engl Second Lang/Slavic (office: CARLA-Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition)	
<a href="#">Arthur E. Walzer</a> (SM, S&TC)	Communication Studies	Literacy and Rhetorical Studies Minor

# Technical Communication Certificate

## Your Advisor

Upon admission to the Certificate in STC Program, your advisor will be Joe Moses. Feel free to contact him directly.

Joe Moses, Ph.D.

Senior Lecturer

Advisor to Master of Science and Certificate Programs in Scientific and Technical Communication

Office: 612-624-2199

Cell: 612-554-6897

[moses004@umn.edu](mailto:moses004@umn.edu)

204 Nolte Center

You are free to change advisors at any time and without any ill feeling. All you have to do is to get the approval of the new advisor, inform Joe Moses, and let the Programs Administrator know so our records can be updated.

## Requirements

This program is designed with the working professional in mind. Academic advisors will work with you to help you complete the certificate. You may transfer all 15 credits of your certificate course work into the Master of Science in scientific and technical communication after being admitted to the M.S. program.

The certificate consists of 15 graduate credits taken from the Department of Writing Studies. They are:

- 3 cr      WRIT 4501 Usability and Human Factors in Technical Communication
  
- Choose 1    WRIT 4431 Intersections of STC & Law  
              WRIT 4562 International Professional Communication  
              WRIT 4573W Writing Proposals and Grant Management  
              WRIT 4664W Science Writing for Popular Audiences
  
- 3 cr      WRIT 5001 Introduction to Graduate Studies in Scientific & Technical Communication
- 3 cr      WRIT 5112 Information Design
- 3 cr      WRIT 5561 Editing and Style for Technical Communicators
- 3 cr      WRIT 5671 Visual Rhetoric

Note that none of the courses require prerequisite courses. Courses are typically offered once per year.



## Five Steps to a Certificate in Scientific and Technical Communication

### Step 1

Register for at least one course in fall and spring semesters, including the semester in which you plan to graduate, until you complete your certificate coursework requirements.

### Step 2

Complete the Graduate School Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Plan of Study Form, available online: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/postbac/index.html> in Degree Completion Steps. Discuss it with your advisor by the end of your second semester of study.

Submit the approved form to the CLA Graduate Programs office in 113 Johnston Hall at least one term prior to your anticipated term of certificate completion.

### Step 3

Obtain your Graduation Packet from the Graduate School. Request it online at <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/postbac/index.html> in Degree Completion Steps one semester before you plan to graduate.

### Step 4

From the packet, complete and submit The Graduate Application for Degree form to the Office of the Registrar by the first business day of the month you intend to graduate.

Also from the packet, complete and submit the signed Final Report Form to the Graduate Student Services and Progress Office in 160 Williamson Hall by the last business day of the month you intend to graduate.

### Step 5

Follow instructions provided to you by the Graduate School. During the 2nd or 3rd week of the month you apply to graduate, you will receive an email communication from the Graduate School to your U of M email address. The email will either

- alert you to remaining requirements that must be completed in order for your certificate to be awarded; or
- confirm that you have completed all certificate requirements, and inform you of the date upon which your certificate will be awarded.

## Regular Progress, Forms, Graduation

Each student will need to file an approved certificate Degree Plan indicating the courses that will be taken (follow the link found on this site: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/index.html>). Completion of the certificate program requires completion of the indicated courses, with a grade of B or better and with an overall GPA in certificate course work of 2.80 or better. No capstone course or final exam will be necessary for students to complete this certificate program.

You are expected to take a minimum of two courses (one each fall and spring semester) every year to maintain active status, including the term in which you will officially complete your certificate. If you are not able to take courses, you should consult with your advisor because it will affect your status with the program and the Graduate School.

To maintain active status in the program without taking a course, you must register for Grad 0999 with your advisor's approval. Grad 0999 is a zero-tuition, zero-credit registration that satisfies the Graduate School registration requirement. It does not satisfy registration requirements for graduate student employment at the University, international student agencies, and does not satisfy most loan deferment requirements. Be sure to read all of the information about this registration option on the Graduate School's web site before registering, please see:

<http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/registration/specialcategories/>.

The Department of Writing Studies limits registration in GRAD 0999 to one semester only.

The Graduate School has a very helpful web site with a certificate completion checklist and electronic access to the various forms you need to file for the Certificate Program:

<http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/index.html>. You are expected to follow those deadlines and rules; if you have questions ask your advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), or the Programs Administrator.

## Change of Status: From the Certificate to the M.S. Program

This certificate provides a gateway for you to participate in the outstanding education that the University of Minnesota offers. While you are participating in this certificate program, you will receive academic advising from graduate faculty in the Department of Writing Studies. Through this advising, faculty work to identify and prepare students who show an interest in and promise for the full M.S. in Scientific and Technical Communication (S&TC) program. These students will be able to transfer up to 15 credits from the certificate program in to the M.S. in S&TC program, if accepted into that program.

## M.S. in Scientific and Technical Communication

### The Advising System

Upon admission to the M.S. in STC program, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and admission committee will assign you an advisor.

You are free to change advisors at any time and without any ill feeling. Just get the approval of the new advisor, inform the old advisor, and let the Programs Administrator know of the change so that our records can be updated.

### Requirements

A minimum of 33 credits is required as follows:

3 cr	WRIT 4501 Usability and Human Factors in Technical Communication
3 cr	WRIT 5001 Introduction to Graduate Studies in Scientific & Technical Communication.
3 cr	WRIT 5112 Information Design
3 cr	WRIT 4431 Intersections of STC & Law
Choose 1	WRIT 4562 International Professional Communication
	WRIT 4573W Writing Proposals and Grant Management
	WRIT 4664W Science Writing for Popular Audiences
3 cr	WRIT 5561 Editing and Style for Technical Communicators
3 cr	WRIT 5671 Visual Rhetoric
3 cr	WRIT 8505 Design Project
12 cr	Related Field Competency Area— See possible areas of study below.

### Related Field Competency Area (12 credits)

Possible areas of study include, but are not limited to:

- Health Sciences
- International Technical Communication
- Food Science and Nutrition
- Technical Communication and Software Engineering
- Technical Communication and Environmental Science
- Technical Communication and Law

### Graduate-level Minors

Students can seek a graduate-level minor from the list below to fulfill the competency are requirement, upon Advisor and Director of Graduate Study for MSSTC approval. See the graduate catalog for more information on these graduate-level minors.

- Bioethics
- Bioinformatics
- Cognitive Science
- Conflict Management
- Human Factors / Ergonomics
- Human Genetics
- Human Rights
- International Education

### Internships (Optional)

M.S. students who plan to specialize in industry or government but have no technical communication experience may want to consider finding an internship. Internships provide experience in a professional environment and give direct exposure to the ethics and responsibilities of practice. The experience also builds confidence in your ability to synthesize and apply course work. To earn 3 credits, you must complete a minimum of 120 hours of internship work, work with your advisor or program director to outline the work and reports involved, and register for 3 credits of WRIT 5196: Internship in Scientific and Technical Communication. The three credits may be applied toward the 12 credits required in a related field competency area.

### Satisfactory Progress toward Degree

The MS in S&TC student should meet once a year with his or her advisor to complete and discuss an annual report of progress. Students must make satisfactory progress by meeting grade and progress standards. Students having exceptional difficulties maintaining progress should meet with their advisors to discuss whether or not a letter to the Director of Graduate Studies, explaining the need for an exception to the progress rules, is in order. A faculty committee will then determine whether or not to grant an exception.

The Graduate School has a very helpful web site with a degree completion steps and electronic access to the various forms you need to file: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/masters/index.html>.

You are expected to follow Graduate School deadlines and rules; if you have questions, ask your advisor, the DGS, or the Programs Administrator.

In March of your first year (and each subsequent year), complete the department's form F-1, Graduate Student Progress Report.

In fall semester of your second year, complete the Graduate School's Degree Plan (found in Degree Completion Steps: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/masters/index.html>). Once the Program form is approved by the Graduate School, download their Graduation Packet which has the Application for Degree form, final report form, and spells out other important steps you must follow.

## M. A. in Rhetoric & Scientific and Technical Communication

### The Advising System

Upon admission to the M.A. in RSTC program, the director of graduate studies (DGS) and admission committee will assign you an advisor. This decision involves a match between your interests and the faculty member's interests, expertise, and availability. Most students have the same advisor through their Plan B Paper, but our system is flexible, so that some change advisors as their interests develop and change.

You are free to change advisors at any time and without any ill feeling. Just get the approval of the new advisor, inform the old advisor, and let the Programs Administrator know of the change so that our records can be updated.

### Degree Requirements

M.A. students in RSTC are required to earn a minimum of 33 credits in course work, 24 of which must be taken in Writing Studies courses and seminars. You should realize that these are minimum requirements. We encourage you to take additional course work as appropriate to your interests, backgrounds, and thesis topic.

### Coursework Requirements

(as of Fall 2012)

- 6 cr Classical and Modern Rhetoric (WRIT 5775 and 5776)
- 6 cr Research Core (WRIT 8011 and 8012)
- 9 cr One course or seminar in each of the core areas: Rhetoric Theory and History, Technical Communication and Culture, and Writing Studies and Pedagogy
- 6 cr Minor or supporting field—must be from outside the Writing Studies department
- 3 cr Elective from inside or outside
- 3 cr Directed Research, WRIT 8794, for the Plan B paper

### Specialty Areas (at least 6 credits)

This list of specialty areas represents some of the areas of interest and expertise of the faculty in the RSTC program. Note that required courses are likely to be part or all of your specialty area. We urge you to take advantage of the Writing Studies seminars in these areas. You may create another specialty area in consultation with your advisor.

- Digital literacies
- Internet studies
- Professional and technical communication
- Theories of writing
- Writing pedagogies
- Rhetorics of science, medicine, or law
- Rhetorical theory

You will also be required to:

- Write a plan B paper
- Pass a final oral exam
- Maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree.

## Minors & Supporting Programs

The M.A. program requires coursework outside the department, either as a formal minor or “supporting program.” These courses (at least 6 credits) are intended to complement your R&STC program. You need an outside member on your exam committee; if you have a formal minor, that person must be on its faculty.

### Minors

The current Graduate School Catalog describes minors in many departments (in each department’s “Degree Program” section), as well as several free-standing interdepartmental or intercollegiate minor programs. For examples of minors popular with students in Writing Studies, see the PhD section of this handbook.

### Supporting Program

Unlike minors, a supporting program does not have to meet the formal requirements of another department. A set of complementary courses from one or more departments—but not Department of Writing Studies courses, and approved by your advisor—constitutes a supporting program.

### Second Language

There is no formal second language requirement. However, if you plan to study Classical rhetoric, you should be proficient in Latin or Greek (or both). If you plan to study rhetoric or technical communication in an international setting, you should be proficient in the relevant language or languages.

## Capstone/ the Paper

At the end of your program, you will do a “Plan B” project, which involves writing a paper for a specific scholarly journal.\* Your topic must be approved by your advisor and the DGS. To complete the required 33 credits, you'll register for the 3-credit class, WRIT 8794 Directed Research while you write your paper and then present the finished paper in an oral exam.

The paper should be modeled after a published paper in a scholarly journal related to your interests. It should be accompanied by a prolegomenon describing the targeted journal and the paper itself. In the prolegomenon (3 to 5 pages), you explain how you became interested in the topic, why you think the topic is important, and briefly summarize the argument of your paper. You would also (and this is most important) review two or three academic journals that would consider publishing a paper on your topic; then explain why you chose the targeted journal over the others. You should also attach to the prolegomenon a photocopy of a typical paper from the targeted journal.

If you have published an article (12 printed pages or longer), then you should write up the prolegomenon and review of other journals that you considered or might have considered for placing your article.

The paper itself must make a contribution to knowledge in the field. A review of the literature, for example, would generally not be approved as a Plan B paper. The paper should demonstrate your ability to identify a scholarly topic of interest to the readership of the journal, justify the importance of the topic, and prove a thesis. It should conform in formatting to the guidelines offered by the editor of the targeted journal.

You then defend the paper and choice of the journal in a one-hour oral exam.

\* “Plan B” is the term used by the Graduate School for a capstone project involving a single example of scholarly writing. Our program does not offer the “Plan A” option which involves a formal thesis.

### **Your Committee**

You need an examining committee comprised of two faculty members from Writing Studies and one from another department. Some professors hold graduate faculty positions in Writing Studies and another department and can serve in either capacity. You should discuss the composition of this committee with your advisor or the DGS.

Students should provide members of the examining committee with a copy of the paper and the prolegomenon after the advisor has approved them.

Students should review the paper and rationale with their advisor and provide members of the examining committee with a copy of the paper and the prolegomenon after the advisor has approved them. When all agree that the paper is ready for defense, schedule the oral exam with your committee, allowing 1-2 hours. Once you and your committee agree on a date and time, contact the Programs Administrator for help in finding a room and advertising the presentation to the department.

You cannot schedule your oral exam until all course work has been completed and your Degree Plan form has been approved. This must be scheduled no later than September 15 of the beginning of your third year. Additional time may be approved by your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

### **The Final Oral Exam**

Check with your advisor about the nature of the final oral defense or exam. Typically, there is both a public presentation, which should take no more than 30 minutes, and a discussion limited to you and the committee members. The public presentation would include your explaining your interest in the topic, justifying your choice of the targeted journal, and summarizing your argument in the paper. Audience members are invited to ask questions for about 15-30 minutes and then they will be asked to leave; members of the examining committee then ask you additional questions. When members of the committee have completed this questioning, you will be asked to leave the room; the committee discusses your performance and invites you back to tell you its decision. The results can be “Pass” or “Fail” with a majority vote. A retake can only be approved with the unanimous consent of the

committee, providing the reexamination is conducted by the original examination committee. Bring the “Final Examination Report” form with you to the exam.

## Registration

Master’s students, who have completed all course requirements and are working as a graduate assistant, may qualify for WRIT 8333 Master Advanced Standing (which reduces the benefits that the hiring department must pay). For more information, please review the requirements at: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/registration/specialcategories> and contact the Programs Administrator before you file the form.

To maintain active status in the program without taking a course, you must register for Grad 0999 with your advisor’s approval. Grad 0999 is a zero-tuition, zero-credit registration that satisfies the Graduate School’s registration requirement. It does not satisfy registration requirements for graduate student employment at the University, international student agencies, and does not satisfy most loan deferment requirements. Be sure to read all of the information about this registration option on the Graduate School’s web site before registering.

The Department of Writing Studies limits registration in GRAD 0999 to two semesters only.

## Benchmarks, Forms, and Satisfactory Progress

The department thinks it is better for students, for our program, and for the profession if takes two years to complete a Master’s. Students must begin to think about a paper topic soon after they arrive, not at the end of their course of study, and structure their course work toward learning what they need to know to complete the paper.

The Graduate School has a very helpful web site with a degree completion checklist and electronic access to the various forms you need to file. You are expected to follow those deadlines and rules; if you have questions ask your advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), or the Programs Administrator. <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/index.html>

We have some local benchmarks and forms as well.

In March of your first year (and each subsequent year), complete the department’s Graduate Student Progress Report (form f-1: <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-1b.pdf>). Your advisor must sign this before you turn it in to the DGS.

In fall semester of your second year, complete the Graduate School’s Degree Plan. You need to have your examining committee membership to do that. To transfer credits, fill out the Graduate School’s Petition Form and include it. Also complete the department’s M.A. Program Form (f-2a: <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-2a.pdf>). Turn both into the DGS.

Once the Degree Plan is approved by the Graduate School, download their Graduation Packet which has the Application for Degree form, final Examination report, and spells out other important steps you must follow. You are expected to follow those deadlines and rules; if you have questions ask your



advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), or the Programs Administrator.

<http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/masters/index.html>

### Satisfactory Progress

This assumes that you are teaching and take 2 or 3 courses a semester. The requirement is 33 credits (11 courses) including directed research (8794). In order to complete the degree in two years, you must take three courses in two semesters and write the Capstone paper in spring of your second year.

	Registration	Department	Graduate School
<b>Year 1</b>			
Fall	2-3 courses, 6-9 credits		
Spring	2-3 courses, 6-9 credits	Department Progress form (March)	
<b>Year 2</b>			
Fall	2-3 courses, 6-9 credits	Department Program form	Degree Plan (after 10 credits) – with committee members
	Required courses should be completed	Organize Plan B (Capstone) committee	
Spring	2 courses, 6 credits	<i>If you wish, apply for the Ph.D. the application deadline is the first week in January</i>	Last time to file Degree Plan
	Directed Research (8794) 3 credits	Department Progress Form if degree is not completed (March)	Bring Final Exam form to the oral
	Capstone paper and oral exam	End of 2 years of support	
	Graduate		

### Change of Status: From the M.A. to the Ph.D. Program

Many students wish to enter the Ph.D. program after successfully completing their M.A. If you wish to do so, you should talk with your advisor or the DGS about applying in early January of your second year. If you are accepted, it will be contingent on your completing the M.A. by fall of your third year. You will be able to transfer most or all of your M.A. courses into the Ph.D. program.

## Ph.D. in Rhetoric & Scientific and Technical Communication

### The Advising System

Upon admission to the Ph.D. in RSTC program, the director of graduate studies (DGS) and admission committee will assign you an advisor. This decision involves a match between your interests and the faculty member's interests, expertise, and availability. Most students have the same advisor through their dissertation, but our system is flexible, so that some change advisors as their interests develop and change.

You are free to change advisors at any time and without any ill feeling. Just get the approval of the new advisor, inform the old advisor, and let the Programs Administrator know of the change so that our records can be updated.

### Degree Requirements

As a Ph.D. student in the Department of Writing Studies degree in rhetoric and scientific and technical communication, you are required to earn a minimum of 42 credits (14 courses) in course work, at least 27 of which must be taken in Writing Studies classes and seminars.\* In addition, you must take 24 dissertation credits for a total of 66 credits. Students with a Masters degree in a field related to rhetoric, scientific and technical communication, or similar fields typically can transfer 6 credits (2 courses) toward these requirements. The number of credits and the requirements they fulfill are determined by your advisor and the DGS in consultation with you.

**Research methods** – each one offered in fall semester in alternate years. 8012 fall 2013, 8011, fall 2014.

- |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research core | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research Methods in Writing Studies and Technical Communication (Writing Studies 8011)</li><li>• Applied Research Methods in Writing Studies and Technical Communication (Writing Studies 8012)</li></ul> |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Three core areas.** Students must take one Writing Studies (WRIT) seminar or course in each area, and two others from any of the three. The course numbers are examples. Total of 5 seminars or courses (15 credits). 8-level seminars are on different topics and may be repeated. Students must take preliminary written examinations in rhetoric and one other area.

- |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rhetoric Theory and History  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• WRIT 8510, Seminar in Rhetoric</li><li>• WRIT 5775, Rhetorical Tradition: Classical Era</li><li>• WRIT 5776, Rhetorical Tradition: Modern Era</li></ul>                                                             |
| Writing Studies and Pedagogy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• WRIT 8540, Seminar in Technical Communication and Composition Pedagogies</li><li>• WRIT 8560, Seminar in Writing Studies</li><li>• 5-level course: WRIT 5531, Introduction to Writing Theory and Pedagogy</li></ul> |

Technical  
Communication,  
Technology, and  
Culture

- WRIT 8520, Seminar in Scientific and Technical Communication
- WRIT 8550, Seminar in Technology, Culture, and Communication

**Specialty Area or Concentration.** Three courses (9 credits); students are encouraged to take one in another department, and should take two in Writing Studies. The third preliminary examination is in this area.

*Examples:*

- Digital literacies
- Internet studies
- Professional and technical communication
- Theories of writing
- Writing pedagogies
- Rhetorics of science, medicine, or law
- Rhetorical theory

## Minors and Supporting Programs

The Ph.D. program requires coursework outside the department, either as a formal minor or “supporting program.” These courses (at least 6 credits for the M.A. and 12 credits for the Ph.D.) are intended to complement your R&STC program.

A departmental or interdepartmental doctoral minor, or 12 credits of courses or seminars from one or more other departments that are a coherent program of study to complement your studies, particularly your Specialty Area. While you can use one Writing Studies course as part of your supporting program, you must have a total of twelve credits outside the department as part of your formal Degree Plan. You need an outside member on your exam committee; if you have a formal minor, that person must be on its faculty.

*\* You must earn at least a B grade in all courses.*

- Feminist Studies
- Literacy and Rhetorical Studies (e.g., taking English and Curriculum and Instruction courses)
- Human Factors/Ergonomics
- History of Science, Technology, and Medicine
- Second Language Studies—English as a Second Language
- Comparative Studies in Discourse and Society (focus on theory)

Other departments:

- American Studies
- Anthropology (for ethnography)
- Classical and Near Eastern Studies
- Education, Curriculum, and Instruction
- Educational Psychology
- English
- History
- Linguistics
- Philosophy
- Sociology
- Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences

#### Other free-standing minors

- International Education
- Museum Studies
- Public Health
- Studies of Science and Technology
- Transportation Studies (certificate)

**Dissertation credits.** Mandatory 24 credits in Doctoral Thesis Credits (Writing Studies 8888), usually taken during as 12 credits each in the semester when you take preliminary examinations and the semester after you pass those examinations. After that, each semester, take Doctoral Full Time Equivalent Status with one-credit registration (Writing Studies 8444).

You will also be required to:

- Pass written and oral preliminary examinations
- Write a dissertation prospectus
- Write a dissertation and pass the final oral exam (defense)
- Maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree

#### Second Language

There is no formal second language requirement. However, if you plan to study Classical rhetoric, you should be proficient in Latin or Greek (or both). If you plan to study rhetoric or technical communication in an international setting, you should be proficient in the relevant language or languages.

#### Benchmarks, Forms, and Satisfactory Progress

The department thinks it is better for students, for our program, and for the profession if it takes four or five years to complete a Ph.D. Students taking longer run the risk of running out of funding as a graduate instructor while they're trying to write their dissertation—adding to the stress of the process. We are committed to supporting your efforts at maintaining satisfactory progress during your time in the program.

Students must begin to think about the dissertation soon after they arrive, not at the end of their course work, and structure their course work toward learning what they need to know to complete the dissertation. For Ph.D. students it means that they must summon the courage to take their exams, not when they feel they know everything, but when they feel they know what they were taught in their seminars and courses.

The Graduate School has a very helpful web site with a degree completion checklist and electronic access to the various forms you need to file. You are expected to follow those deadlines and rules; if you have questions ask your advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS,) or the Programs Administrator. <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/doctoral/index.html>.

We have some local benchmarks and forms as well.

In March of your first year (and each subsequent year), complete the department's Graduate Student Progress Report (form f-1: <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-1a.pdf>). Your advisor must sign this before you turn it in to the DGS.

During your second year, complete the Graduate School's Degree Plan (available on the degree completion checklist: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/doctoral/index.html>). You need to include the members of your examining committee on the form. Also complete the department's Ph.D. Program Form. Turn both into the DGS.

About one semester before your final oral, download the Graduation Packet which has the preliminary exam and dissertation proposal forms, degree application, and spells out other important steps you must follow.

### Satisfactory progress

The scenario assumes that you are teaching and take 2 or 3 courses a semester, and that you transfer 6 credits from your external Masters program. The requirement is 42 credits (14 courses), plus 24 doctoral thesis credits.

	Registration	Department	Graduate School
<b>Year 1</b>			
Fall	2-3 courses, 6-9 credits		
Spring	2-3 courses, 6-9 credits	Department Progress Form (March)	
<b>Year 2</b>			
Fall	2-3 courses, 6-9 credits	Organize Prelim Exam committee Department Program Form	Degree Plan (after 10 credits) – with committee and transfer credits
Spring	2-3 courses, 6-9 credits	Department Progress Form (March)	“Mid-career” fellowship application (if appropriate)* Last time to file Degree Plan
<b>Year 3 –</b>			
Fall	Complete coursework; take Thesis Credits (8888) to fill out 12 per semester		
	Preliminary exams	Expected 1 year after last course; no later than 3 semesters  Organize dissertation committee after passing prelims	Written and Oral prelim forms

Spring	Dissertation Prospectus	Within one year after prelim oral	
	Thesis credits (8888) until 24 are completed	Department Progress Form (March)	Dissertation Fellowship application (if appropriate)
<b>Year 4</b>			
Fall	Thesis credits (8888) until 24 are completed		
Spring	FTE 1 cr. (8444)	Department Progress Form (March)	*Dissertation Fellowship application (if appropriate)
<b>Year 5</b>			
Fall	FTE 1 cr. (8444)		
Spring	FTE 1 cr. (8444)	Final Oral exam	Defense ready form
		End of 5 years of support	Oral exam form

\* Note, for example, the Wallace-Stout fellowship. (See <http://www.grad.umn.edu/fellowships/index.html>.)

\*The DDF guidelines specify that the award is intended for those "making timely progress who will be entering their **final year** of graduate study." (This is a change from last year). The guidelines also state that, "Nominees who are in their sixth year or later year of study must provide an explanation from the nominating program regarding the scholarly and research productivity of the individual, in order to establish the student's record of good progress."

The DGS will give written notice to students who are not making satisfactory-progress milestones and who may lose their Graduate Instructor support. The deadlines will be November 15 for spring and July 1 for the fall (so there is time to find a replacement teacher). Notices will be sent out around October 1 and May 15, respectively.

- Students with two or more incompletes, must get down to one
- Students who have not taken (and passed) prelims and are one year (2 semesters) after completing their program's coursework
- Students who did not complete their dissertation prospectus one year (2 semesters) after passing prelims

A copy will go to the advisor (as well as to Barbara Jensen, the department Administrator, and to the Director of First Year Writing). The advisor could write a letter to the DGS that explains the situation and how the problem would be resolved by or soon after the deadline.

## Preliminary Exams

You will take three written area examinations and an oral exam that is based on your written examinations and your possible dissertation topic.

In your second year, you select an examining committee made up of your advisor, usually two other members of the Writing Studies faculty, and one from another department. You should choose committee members who teach and publish in the area of the exam for which they will write questions. Also, ideally, you should have established a working relationship with faculty members on your committee; typically, students ask faculty with whom they have had at least one course. (In unusual cases, your committee can have five members.)

Some professors hold graduate faculty status in Writing Studies and another department, and can serve in either capacity (see the lists at the beginning of this Handbook or by using the [Graduate Education Faculty Role List](#)). If you have taken a formal minor, the outside member must represent it. You should meet with your advisor to create a committee to be proposed to the DGS, with final approval granted by the Graduate School. Once the committee has been submitted to the Graduate School, any changes must be approved by them as well.

## Registration While Preparing for and Taking Preliminary Examinations

### **WRIT 8888 – Doctoral Thesis Credits**

Starting in the semester when all of the courses on your Degree Plan are completed or you have one or two left, and you are compiling your reading lists, and preparing for examinations you should begin to take the 24 credits of WRIT 8888. If you are taking courses, take the number of Thesis Credits so the credit total is 12. After you pass preliminary examinations, you should take up to 12 credits a semester in WRIT 8888; however, if you wish to take a course or seminar, you may do so, and reduce the number of 8888 credits accordingly. The semester after the 24 credits are completed, register for FTE Doctoral (see below on Registration While Writing your Dissertation). In all cases you need to take at least 6 credits in order to be registered as a full-time student and be eligible to hold a teaching or research assistantship.

### **Preliminary Written Examination**

The preliminary written exam consists of three essays, each of which is an open-book, take-home format and is written in a 48-hour period. You may consult books or notes for these exams, though your preparation should be such that you require only occasional recourse to these materials. Each exam will consist either of one or two questions. They will allow you some choice with respect to questions. Where you are asked to pursue a single question, you will have two or three options; for two-question exams you will choose from three or four. The examiner may limit the length of the examination, for example, to “around 15 pages.”

You take three written examinations, one in Rhetoric Theory and History, one in either Writing Studies and Pedagogy or Technical Communication and Technology and Culture, and one in your specialty. The core area exams are built around set reading lists complemented by additional texts; all readings for the specialty exam are determined by you, your advisor, and others on your committee. There is also a preliminary oral exam that covered your readings and your possible dissertation topic.

The lists for the three core exams are anchored by 15 or so selections determined by the faculty and reviewed periodically. The additional ten texts for each core exam are to be determined by you in

consultation with your advisor and appropriate committee members. To some extent, these test your familiarity with bodies of knowledge.

The 25 selections for the specialty area are negotiated by you, the faculty advisor, and any additional committee members that they deem necessary. The open-field, specialty exam is intended to prepare you in the research area and methodology of your dissertation. Sometimes, but by no means always, the “outside” member of the committee sets the specialty exam topic.

Students, advisors, and other committee members should recognize that the make-up of the dissertation committee may be different from that of the preliminary exam committee; this is not unusual and does not reflect on the value of any member’s contribution to the your education.

Assign members to the Preliminary oral examination committee using the [Degree completion steps](#).

## **Preliminary Exam Reading Lists**

### **Rhetoric Theory and History Reading List**

(Spring 2012)

1. Gorgias, “Encomium of Helen” (Kennedy translation recommended)
2. Isocrates, Against the Sophists
3. Isocrates, Antidosi
4. Plato, Gorgias
5. Plato, Phaedru
6. Aristotle, On Rhetoric (Kennedy translation recommended)
7. Cicero, De Oratore
8. Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria. Selections from books 2, 6, 10, 11, and 12.
9. Andrea Lunsford, ed. *Reclaiming Rhetorica : Women in the Rhetorical Tradition*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995.
10. Kenneth Burke, *On Symbols and Society*. Joseph R. Gusfield, Ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989
11. Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation (excerpted) and Chaim Perelman, "The New Rhetoric: A Theory of Practical Reasoning," both as included in Bizzell & Herzberg, *The Rhetorical Tradition*
12. Michel Foucault Selections from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Discourse* as included in Bizzell & Herzberg, The Rhetorical Tradition.
13. The “Rhetorical Situation” Debates: a) Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation"; b) Richard E. Vatz, “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation,”; c) Scott Consigny, “Rhetoric and Its Situations”.
14. Carolyn Miller. "Genre as Social Action." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984): 151-176.
15. Richard Graff and Michael Leff. *Revisionist Historiography and Rhetorical Tradition(s)*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2005. 11-30.

16 through 25 to be determined through negotiation by the advisor, committee, and the student

### **Technical Communication and Culture Reading List**



(Spring 2012)

1. from Johndan Johnson-Eilola and Stuart A. Selber, Eds., Central Works in Technical Communication, Oxford University Press, 2004. At least the following:
  - a) Carolyn R. Miller, "A Humanistic Rationale for Technical Writing."
  - b) Robert J. Connors, "The Rise of Technical Writing Instruction in America."
  - c) Steven B. Katz, "The Ethic of Expediency: Classical Rhetoric, Technology, and the Holocaust."
2. Carolyn Rude, "Mapping the Research Questions in Technical Communication," Journal of Business and Technical Communication 23.2 (2009); 174-201
3. from Mary Lay and Laura Gurak. Research in Technical Communication. Greenwood, 2002. At least three selections to be negotiated with advisor.
4. Carol Berkenkotter and Thomas N. Huckin, Genre Knowledge in Disciplinary Communication, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995.
5. Bernadette Longo, Spurious Coin. State University of New York Press, 2000.
6. Michael Salvo, "Ethics of Engagement: User-Centered Design and Rhetorical Methodology," Technical Communication Quarterly 10.3 (2001): 273-290.
7. from Rachel Spilka, Ed., Digital Literacy for Technical Communication: 21st Century Theory and Practice. Routledge, 2009. At least three selections to be negotiated with advisor.
8. Stuart Selber, Multiliteracies for a Digital Age. NCTE Studies in Writing and Rhetoric, 2004.
9. Laura Gurak, Cyberliteracy: Navigating the Internet with Awareness. Yale University Press, 2002.
10. Gunther Kress, Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach. Taylor and Francis, 2010.
11. Anne Wysocki, Johndan Johnson-Eilola, Cynthia Selfe, Geoffrey Sirc. Writing New Media. Utah State University Press, 2004.
12. from Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley, Eds., Rhetorical Bodies, University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.
  - a) Carole Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites and Exemplars of Rhetoric's Materiality"
  - b) Barbara Dickson, "Reading Maternity Materially: The Case of Demi Moore."
  - c) Christina Haas, "Materializing Public and Private: The Spatialization of Conceptual Categories in Discourses of Abortion."
13. Carolyn Miller and Dawn Shepherd, " "Blogging as Social Action: A Genre Analysis of the Weblog," in Into the Blogosphere: Rhetoric, Community, and Culture of Weblogs, ed. Laura Gurak, Smiljana Antonijevic, Laurie Johnson, Clancy Ratliff, and Jessica Reyman. University of Minnesota Libraries, 2004.
14. Carol Berkenkotter, Patient Tales: Case Histories and the Uses of Narratives in Psychiatry, University of South Carolina Press, 2008.

OR

Mary Lay Schuster and Amy D. Proppen, Victim Advocacy in the Courtroom: Persuasive Practices in Domestic Violence and Child Protection Cases. Northeastern Series on Gender, Crime, and Law, 2011.

15. Christina Haas and Stephen Witte. "Writing as embodied practice: The case of engineering standards." Journal of Business and Technical Communication 15.4 (October, 2001): 413-457.

16 through 25 to be determined through negotiation by the advisor, committee, and the student

### Writing Studies and Pedagogy Reading List

1. Bawarshi, A.S. and Reiff, M.J. (2010) Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy, Parlor Press.
2. Berlin, J.A. (1988). Rhetoric and ideology in the writing class. College English (50) 5, 477-494.
3. Bolter, J. D. (1991). Writing space: The computer, hypertext, and the history of writing. Hillsdale, NJ: : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates..
4. Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (2000). Multi-literacies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures. London: Routledge.
5. Fox, T, (1999). Defending access: A critique of standards in higher education. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann.
6. Giroux, H. A. (2001) Theory and resistance in education: Toward a pedagogy for the opposition. Revised and expanded edition. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
7. Gore, J. M. (1993). The struggle for pedagogies: Critical and feminist discourses as regimes of truth. New York, Routledge.
8. Graff, H. (1991). The literacy myth: Cultural integration and social structure in the Nineteenth Century. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
9. Haas, C. (1996). Writing technology: Studies on the materiality of literacy. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
10. Hillocks, G. (1986). Research on written composition: New directions for teaching. Urbana, IL: National Conference on Research in English and Educational Resources Information Center.
11. Levy, C. and Ransdell, eds. (1996). The science of writing: Theories, methods, individual differences, and applications. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
12. Neel, J. (1988). Plato, Derrida, and writing. Carbondale: SIU Press.
13. Richardson, E. (2003). African American literacies. London: Routledge.
14. Scribner, S. & Cole, M. (1981). The psychology of literacy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
15. Witte, S. (1992). Context, text, intertext: Toward a constructivist semiotic of writing. Written Communication 9, 237-308.

16 through 25 to be determined through negotiation by the advisor, committee, and the student

### Specialty Area Reading List

All 25 selections to be determined through negotiation by the advisor, committee, and student.

## Scheduling the Preliminary Examinations

Plan for the exams as you complete your coursework. You are expected to take your exams within the year following completion of your coursework and no later than the fourth year after beginning the program.\* Barring unusual circumstances (e.g., illness, extended family emergency, adoption or birth of a child) students who do not complete the written examinations in the three terms immediately following the completion of their coursework may not continue in the program.

Preliminary area exams are given during pre-set windows, during the 6th through 8th weeks of fall and spring semesters, and the first two weeks in August for the summer window. At least one month prior to the exam period, you should notify your advisor, the other examiners, and the Graduate Programs Administrator of your intention to take the exams. Then arrange with the Programs Administrator to get the exams on three specific dates. You are responsible for returning the answers to each examiner within 48 hours of receiving the questions; your failure to deliver responses on time will be factored into the assessment of the exam. It is possible but not required that you work with the full committee to set a tentative date for the oral exam while the last area examination is being read.

### **Preliminary written exam windows, 2013-14**

#### Fall 2014

- Writtens: October 3 through October 19
- Oral: Starting the week of November 3

#### Spring 2015

- Writtens: February 13 through February 28
- Oral: Starting the week of March 9

#### Summer 2014

- Writtens: July 25 through August 3
- Oral: During the first two weeks of Fall semester classes

The advisor notifies you as soon as possible about the evaluation of the exams. The Programs Administrator must be notified so the result of the Preliminary Written Examination can be submitted to the Graduate School. All reservations on the area exams must be cleared up before the result can be submitted. You may then schedule your Preliminary Oral Exam online using the [Degree Completion Steps](#) link once the date is confirmed by your committee, but at least one week before the exam.

See the Ph.D. Degree Completion Checklist for further benchmarks and forms at <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/doctoral/index.html>

## Evaluation of the Written Exams

Two grades are possible: pass or fail. You must pass all three exams in order to take the preliminary oral. If you fail one or two exams, you will be given the opportunity to try again to pass them. Your examiner

(usually with your advisor) will give you specific instructions about how to prepare for the re-take. If you fail one or both of the exams on the second try, you cannot continue in the program. If your advisor and the examiners agree that you have failed all three exams on the first try, you can not continue in the program. The scheduling of any re-takes will impact the scheduling of the preliminary oral.

### **Overview: Steps for the Student**

1. The student negotiates the three reading lists with each examiner
  - All three approved reading lists sent to the advisor by the student.
  - The advisor sends the lists to the DGS for the student's file.
  - DGS asks advisors to anticipate any possible exam takers for the current round.
  - The advisor sends the names of all three examiners to the Graduate Program Administrator, with e-addresses of those who are not in the department.
2. Work with Graduate Program Administrator to schedule exam dates
  - The Graduate Program Administrator conveys those dates to the advisor.
  - The Graduate Program Administrator contacts the examiners to send the exam questions for her so she can e-mail them to the student on schedule.
  - The Graduate Program Administrator indicates the latest day to receive the questions; if needed, she reminds the examiner(s) of those dates.
  - The Graduate Program Administrator sends all three area exam questions to the advisor.
3. Take exam
4. The student e-mails the answers to the specific examiner with copy to the Graduate Program Administrator
  - Examiners have two weeks to read.
  - Each examiner sends a report to the advisor on whether the student has passed or failed the exam, with comments. NOTE: All results are communicated to the student by the advisor, not by the individual examiners.
  - Results
    - If the student fails all or part of one or two area exams, an examiner, in loose consultation with the advisor, sets any re-take exam(s), and they determine when those re-takes will happen.
    - The examiner may decide that problems with a failed exam can be resolved at the oral exam.
    - If needed, the advisor might consult with all of the examiners.
  - The advisor decides if the oral exam can take place. This cannot happen until the student has passed all of the area exams.
    - Note: The advisor chairs the oral exam.
5. Once taking the oral is approved, the Graduate Program Administrator sends the reading lists, the questions, and the student's essays to all members of the committee – including members who were not examiners.
  - The advisor might send the examiners' reports to all members of the committee.

6. The Graduate Program Administrator records the result of the exam with the Graduate School. This indicates that the student has passed the written examination and may take the oral.
  - Typically, a student's oral exam is already scheduled at this point, but it cannot take place until the oral exam form is released by the Graduate School.

## **Preliminary Oral Exam**

The oral exam is based on the area exams, and it may include some discussion of your possible dissertation project. The committee is usually the same as for the written exam. If there are changes, your advisor must notify the Graduate School who must approve the changes. The oral preliminary exam lasts approximately two hours. Faculty are generally willing to discuss the results of your area exams with you prior to the oral; talking with them is a good way to prepare for the oral.

The oral exam should be scheduled no sooner than three weeks after the completion of your last written prelim.

## **Evaluation of the Oral Exam**

Three grades are possible: pass, pass with reservations, or fail. If two of four members of the committee vote to fail the exam, the vote is recorded as a failure. If members vote to pass with reservations, it is taken as a passing vote; however, the reservations must be satisfied before you can continue in the program.

If you pass with reservations, you will be told so immediately after the exam by your advisor. Within one week, your advisor must send a letter to you that clearly stipulate the reservations and the steps required to remove them. A copy of that letter is sent to the Graduate School. When you have satisfied the committee's reservations, a second letter is also required informing you and the Graduate School that the reservations have been removed and that you may proceed toward the degree. You cannot take the oral examination until this is done.

Students who fail the examination may be excluded from candidacy or may be allowed, on unanimous recommendation of the examining committee, to retake the examination, providing the reexamination is conducted by the original committee. In no case may the reexamination take place before 10 weeks have passed. No more than one reexamination is allowed.

## **Dissertation**

A dissertation demonstrates your ability to conduct an independent, original study on researchable questions, using methods and systematic analysis appropriate to those questions, and articulating conclusions that have implications for the advancement of theory.

## **Dissertation Overview**

Writing a dissertation is the goal and culmination of the degree. Think of it as a book-length answer to an important question (or small group of related questions) that can be answered through research and original analysis. The courses you take, the faculty you decide to work most closely with, and the advisor you ultimately select should be chosen with the dissertation in mind. Dissertations often make a

contribution to the research methods used in analyzing discourse, as well as contributing to our understanding of a specific problem, communication medium, theorist, or body of writings.

Some of the theoretical approaches and methods used by faculty and students in Writing Studies are rhetorical theory and criticism, technical communication theory and research, ethnography, pedagogy, human factors, information design and display, literary theory, philosophy, and feminism. These methods or perspectives make it possible for us better to understand the way knowledge is made, debated, and communicated, and effectively engage in these activities. Because a dissertation makes a contribution to scholars' understanding of scholarly methods, the RSTC curriculum emphasizes methods so that you will be prepared to deal with both the substantive and methodological demands of a dissertation.

As described by the Graduate School, a doctoral dissertation is based on original research that makes a significant contribution to knowledge. A dissertation in our program needs to be on a topic significant enough to justify a book-length study but defined narrowly enough to allow for command of the relevant literature and for an original contribution. Dissertations are usually about 150-200 pages in length, though good dissertations have been written by students in the program that are shorter and longer. For a list of titles of dissertations written by students in the RSTC program, see the Alumni tab in our web site.

Before you proceed with your research and writing, you need to form your dissertation committee, then write a prospectus which you present to that committee.

It is important that you and your advisor work closely together throughout the complicated processes of framing, writing, and revising your dissertation. For example, your prospectus can be a starting roadmap for deciding how to conduct your research, the order in which you will draft the chapters, and when those chapters might be ready for review by your advisor and other members of your committee. Perhaps more important is for you to get help, coaching, and encouragement when you run into snags, get stuck, or need to change the direction of your work—that can come from your advisor, others on your committee, your fellow students, and your family.

The Graduate School's web site at <http://www.grad.umn.edu/professional-development/index.html> has many useful links in support of dissertation writing. It also includes a section on dissertating from a distance. Please check it out.

## **Dissertation Committee**

Your dissertation is written with the help and guidance of your advisor.\* Often the faculty member who advised you through the preliminary examination stage of the program serves as the dissertation advisor. But this is not necessarily the case. As with the preliminary examination committee, this must have four members, at least one of whom must be from outside the department. If you have a formal minor, its faculty must be represented. Usually, but not always, examination committee members continue to serve on the dissertation committee. Two members of the committee, including the outside member, are formal "readers" or "reviewers." They read chapter-by-chapter as your advisor approves them. The fourth person is a "member," who reads the defense draft and participates in the final oral

examination. Only your advisor and the two reviewers are required to sign the "Final Reviewers Form." Discuss this process with your committee.

Assign members to the doctoral final exam committee on the [Degree Completion Checklist](#).

\* Your advisor must be a Senior Member of the R&STC faculty. Some dissertations have co-advisors, one of whom must be a Senior Member.

## **Prospectus and Prospectus Examination**

The R&STC program requires that you write a formal prospectus outlining your plans for your dissertation. This is a most important step in the dissertation process because it forces you to think through your whole project, offers you the opportunity to receive suggestions and help from your committee, and ensures that your committee members agree with you and each other on the scope of the project and the method you will use or approach you will take. You should work out the format of your prospectus with your advisor, since faculty may have different expectations. Generally, a prospectus should be about 5,000-6,000 words long. It should include a detailed statement of the problem or exigency your dissertation will address, provide the research question or questions the dissertation will address, and include brief chapter outlines. The prospectus also often includes a formal review of the literature (though this might mean in some cases that the prospectus would exceed the 6,000 word limit) and a bibliography. Often a sample analysis of the type you expect to do throughout your dissertation will be offered in an appendix.

You should present your prospectus to your committee within a year after you have passed your preliminary oral exam. You should schedule a meeting with your committee members and book a room through the Programs Administrator. No fewer than two weeks before the presentation, you must give your advisor and other committee members a copy of your prospectus.

This form is available from the Graduate Programs Administrator and is also in the second Appendix at the end of the handbook.

## **Registration While Writing Your Dissertation**

### **WRIT 8888 – Doctoral Thesis Credits**

Twenty-four credits are required for the PhD degree. These may be taken any time after the second year in consultation with the advisor. Students should complete the 24 credits within two semesters of prelims.

### **WRIT 8444 – Doctoral Full Time Equivalent Status with One Credit Registration**

Register for this every semester after completing the 24 doctoral thesis credits and while you hold a teaching assistantship or fellowship. This significantly reduces the fringe benefits the department must pay. There is an application form: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/registration/specialcategories>.

GRAD 0999 - To maintain active status in the program without taking a course, you must register for Grad 0999 with your advisor's approval. Grad 0999 is a zero-tuition, zero-credit registration that

satisfies the Graduate School's registration requirement. It does not satisfy registration requirements for graduate student employment at the University, international student agencies, and does not satisfy most loan deferment requirements. Be sure to read all of the information about this registration option on the Graduate School's web site before registering.

The Department of Writing Studies limits registration in GRAD 0999 to two semesters only.

## **Endgame: Format and Final Oral Examination ("Defense")**

### **Format**

The Graduate School will only accept dissertations that are formatted according to the specifications outlined in Preparing the Doctoral Dissertation (GS 16). These guidelines are general. Check with your advisor for referencing style and editing conventions. Generally, APA or MLA are acceptable.

### **The Defense**

Before the defense can be scheduled your advisor and your two readers must sign the Reviewer's Report, Ph.D. Thesis (GS2) and you must fill out the online Final Oral Examination Scheduling that sets the time for the two-hour examination, and the work with the Programs Administrator to book a room. You need to allow at least two weeks for all members of the committee to read the defense draft, but check with everyone about that schedule, especially if it coincides with winter break or summer.

In the final oral you will defend your dissertation; that is, outline your approach and major findings. Since the defense is public, your committee may be joined by other members of the department and other interested parties, including, if you wish, your family and friends. For this reason your advisor may ask you to prepare a formal presentation (lasting about 30 minutes) that summarizes your dissertation. Audience members are invited to ask questions for about 15-30 minutes and then they are asked to leave. Members of the committee will ask additional questions about your work. Then you will be asked to leave the room. The chair of the defense conducts a vote of all members who vote "Pass" or "Fail." If a majority votes pass, they will then sign the Final Oral Examination Report that you bring to the Graduate School within 24 hours of the exam (or the following Monday if the exam is late on a Friday). A retake of the examination can only be approved with the unanimous consent of the committee; the reexamination must be conducted by the original committee..

Soon after the oral, your advisor will outline any revisions that you must make. These range from tidying up typographical errors to revising or clarifying part of your dissertation, for example your introduction. Once those changes have been made to your advisor's satisfaction, you write a formal cover sheet with an abstract that your advisor must sign. Then you formally deliver your dissertation to the Graduate School and your degree is awarded.

## **Dossier Service/Job Search**

### **Job Search**

- The Chronicle of Higher Education Jobs Search: <http://chronicle.com/section/Jobs/61/>



- Inside Higher Ed Find Jobs: <http://www.insidehighered.com/>
- Modern Languages Association Job Information List is published by the MLA the JIL is the recognized professional source for announcements of full-time faculty positions available in the fields of English and foreign languages in North American colleges and universities. MLA Job Information List: <http://www.mla.org/jil>
- Interfolio is an online credential, dossier and academic portfolio service to request, store, manage and deliver your confidential recommendation letters, transcripts, or any other documents online. More information available at: <http://www.interfolio.com/>.

### **Departmental Dossier guidelines**

Your dossier should contain:

- At least three letters of recommendation
- Official transcripts

Materials such as resumes, curriculum vitas, statements of teaching and research philosophy, dissertation abstract, lists of courses taught, abstracts of published and/or presented papers etc., should be retained by you and sent with their application as requested.

To start a dossier file:

Transcripts: Students should submit a copy of all transcripts to be included in the dossier file to the Director of Graduate Studies Programs Administrator. If original transcripts from previous institutions were submitted with their application to the U of MN, they can be used as long as they reflect the last degree awarded.

Letters of Recommendation: Students will be asked to sign a confidentiality waiver for their file for each person writing a letter of recommendation. (Ask for a copy of the waiver.) The signed waiver will be kept in their dossier file. Original letters of recommendation should be given directly to the Programs Administrator by the person making the recommendation.

Send the complete mailing address and/or email for each dossier request to the Programs Administrator. Allow a minimum of five working days for the documents to be copied and mailed. All dossiers will be sent by regular US mail or email (according to instructions from the hiring institution). Copies are made of the original letters and transcripts and sent with an Dossier Cover Page using department letterhead.

Dossier files will be maintained by the Department of Writing Studies until five (5) years after graduation. At that time, dossier files will be shredded and discarded per University of Minnesota regulations to maintain confidentiality.

## 2013-2014 Graduate Student Travel Policy

### Conference Presentation

Conference participation is an important form of professional development for M.A. and Ph.D. students. The department offers financial support to students who travel to a conference to give a paper or appear on a panel, but not if they only attend. Only students who are on graduate-student support (G.I., R.A., Fellowship, etc.) are eligible.

The support is in the form of an award (to be submitted for reimbursement for expenses up to but not exceeding, the amount of the award). It can be used to cover transportation from the Twin Cities, hotel, and conference registration, but not meals or other incidental expenses. For local conferences, we only cover registration.

Before leaving for the conference, you should submit your travel plans—conference name, location, dates, and your role at the conference—to Donald Ross (rossj001@umn.edu) and Nan Nelson (nelso789@umn.edu).

After the conference, you must submit original receipts of all expenses—copies of credit-card billing acceptable (with all but the last number on the card masked) including the 5 W's (who, what, when, why and where) to Elizabeth Dunens for processing. Please use the Employee Expense Reimbursement form. This form and the University's policies and procedures are specified at the end of this.

For 2013-2014 the department will cover up to \$800 or one conference, or that amount can be split between two if the cost of one is less than \$800. Owing to the high cost of airfare, for travel to a conference outside North America, we will cover up to \$1,100.

### Dissertation Research

The department can support expenses directly related to dissertation research. This might include travel to a library or archive, purchase of very expensive books or other supplies, payments to informants for an IRB-approved project, etc. Outline the circumstances and costs in an e-mail to the DGS (Donald Ross) with a supporting e-mail from your advisor. After the expenses are incurred, follow the same rules that are used for travel, except be sure to explain how the award is related to your dissertation in the 5 W's.

Note that the Graduate School has a fund for dissertation expenses. The deadline is during spring semester. For additional information please visit:

<http://www.grad.umn.edu/fellowships/index.html>.

Please apply there first, and note that the application must be before the event, not afterward.

### Exceptional Opportunities

The Chair in consultation with the Awards Committee will consider requests for funding for extraordinary occasions such as serving on the board of a national organization, the meeting of a journal review board to which the student has been invited, an invited paper at an international or national conference (where the cost to attend would go beyond the normal amount the department will cover), or an invitation to attend a summer institute. Before the event, you should outline the circumstances and costs in an e-mail to

the DGS with a supporting e-mail from your advisor.

### **Summer**

Summer travel (i.e., June through August) will usually be paid out of the current year's budget. It should meet certain criteria:

1. You must have travel funds still available from the current year.
2. As usual, you have to follow the regular rules for reimbursement.
3. We do not provide travel money for those who have graduated during the year.

If you have used up all of your 2013-2014 travel fund and want to borrow against your 2014-2015 kitty, you must first consult the DGS.

### **Reimbursement:**

#### **Employee Expense Worksheets (includes Travel) and instructions**

1. U Wide Forms: [Employee Expense Worksheet and instructions \(UM 1612 & UM 1612i\)](#)
2. Complete for reimbursement of UMN allowable expenses. (Submit within 10 days from date of receipt or completion of travel). Once this form is completed please print and sign (lower left hand corner),
3. Tape all original receipts on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.
4. Return signed form and receipts to Elizabeth Cahill.
5. Travel reimbursement requests should be made within 30 days of the conclusion of travel.

#### **Policy on Travel Expense Reimbursement:**

[http://www.policy.umn.edu/policies/finance/travel/travel\\_proc02.html](http://www.policy.umn.edu/policies/finance/travel/travel_proc02.html)

## Appendix I: Forms

### Doctoral Degree and Degree Progress:

- Information for Doctoral Students: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/doctors/index.html>
- Forms for Doctoral Students: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/forms/doctors/index.html>
- Thesis Formatting and Submission: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/ThesisSubmission/index.html>
- Writing Studies Student Progress Reports F-1PhD: <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-1a.pdf>

### Master's Degree and Degree Progress:

- Information for Master's Students: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/masters/index.html>
- Forms for Master's Students: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/forms/masters/index.html>
- Writing Studies Student Progress Reports F-1 M.A: <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-1b.pdf>

### M.S.:

Writing Studies Student Progress Reports F-1: <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-1c.pdf>

### Certificate:

Writing Studies Student Progress Reports F-1: <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-1d.pdf>

### Special Purpose:

Special Registration Categories:

<http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/registration/specialcategories/index.html#8444>

(Full-Time Status with One Credit Registration Application (Departmental use only):  
[policy.umn.edu/forms/otr/otr195.pdf](http://policy.umn.edu/forms/otr/otr195.pdf))

Writ 8444 Advance Study Registration Instructions F-17 (PDF)

<http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-17.pdf>

Request for an Advisor F-16 (PDF)

<http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-16.pdf>

## Appendix II: *Ph.D. Requirements for Students who entered the Program before 2012*

### Course work requirements

As a Ph.D. student in rhetoric and scientific and technical communication, you are required to earn a minimum of 42 credits (14 courses) in course work, 21 of which must be taken in Writing Studies classes and seminars. In addition, you must take 24 dissertation credits for a total of 66 credits. Students with a Masters degree in a field related to rhetoric, scientific and technical communication, or similar fields can transfer up to 18 credits toward these requirements. The number of credits and the requirements they fulfill are determined by your advisor and the DGS in consultation with you.

As you can see in the table below, two core areas—(1) rhetorical theory and (2) scientific and technical communication research and theory—and a specialty area constitute the heart of the program.

Pedagogy	Introduction to Writing Instruction: Composition Pedagogy (Writing Studies 5531)		
Rhetoric core	Major Figures in the Rhetorical Tradition: Classical Era (Writing Studies 5775)		
Rhetoric core	Major Figures in the Rhetorical Tradition: Modern Era (Writing Studies 5776)	or	Rhetoric of Science (Writing Studies 5777)
Research core	Research Methods in Writing Studies and Technical Communication (Writing Studies 8011)		
Research core	Applied Research Methods in Writing Studies and Technical Communication (Writing Studies 8012)		
Specialty area	12 credits, from Writing Studies or other departments, in your specialty area, for example: <div> Computer-mediated communication (internet studies)  Environmental rhetoric  Feminist studies  International/intercultural communication  Scientific and technical communication pedagogy  Rhetoric and science  Rhetoric and technology  Science and technology studies </div>		

Support or minor	At least 12 credits from outside the department as a supporting program or a formal minor
Electives	Courses from Writing Studies or other departments to fulfill the minimum requirements of 42
Language	This can be met by coursework or examination..
Dissertation at least 24 credits	Mandatory 24 credits in Doctoral Thesis Credits (Writing Studies 8888), usually taken as 12 credits in each of the two semesters after passing the preliminary oral examination. After that, each semester, take Doctoral Full Time Equivalent Status with One Credit Registration (Writing Studies 8444)

### **Preliminary Written Exam**

Preliminary written exam consist of three essays, each of which is a 48-hour, open-book, take-home format. All students take exams in the two core areas of the program—rhetorical theory, and scientific and technical communication research and theory—and a third exam on their specialty area.

### **Foreign Language Requirement**

M.A. and Ph.D. students must demonstrate reading proficiency in a foreign language.

You can fulfill this requirement in one of four ways:

1. By taking (or having taken previously) one 3-credit college-level foreign language course
2. By successfully completing “German 222: Reading German” or “French 1: Reading in the Arts and Sciences,” both non-credit courses generally offered in the Summer Session
3. By arranging to take and passing a test offered by one of the University ‘s foreign language departments
4. By satisfying your advisor and the DGS that you have reading knowledge of a language

*Appendix III: Dissertation Prospectus*

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

DEPARTMENT OF WRITING STUDIES

*Rhetoric and Scientific and Technical Communication*

*Dissertation Prospectus*

The dissertation prospectus by \_\_\_\_\_ has  
been completed and reviewed by the committee.

Members of the committee:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Advisor)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Department (Outside member)

\_\_\_\_\_

Advisor signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

*Please return this form and a copy of the first page of the prospectus to Nan Nelson.*

## Appendix IV: Graduate Student Resources

**Academic & Professional Development:** <http://www.grad.umn.edu/professional-development/index.html>

Career Workshops: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/professional-development/workshops/index.html>

Preparing Future Faculty: <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/graduate/pff/>

### **Committees**

Assign/update Preliminary Oral Committee: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/assignprelimcommittee/index.html>

Assign/update Final Oral Committee: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/assigndocfinalcommittee/index.html>

Examination Committees: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/examiningcommitteesnew/index.html>

Grad Exam Committees Policy: <http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/APPOINTGRADCOMM.html>

**Diversity in Graduate Education:** <https://diversity.umn.edu/gradeducation/>

**Disability Services:** <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>

### **Dossier Services/Job Search**

Writing Studies Dossier Service (in Handbook): <http://writingstudies.umn.edu/grad/handbook.html>

Interfolio: <http://www.interfolio.com/>

MnSCU: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Faculty positions: <http://www.mnscu.edu/jobs/index2.php>

### **Funding**

Fellowships: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/fellowships>

Travel Grants:

Council of Graduate Students (COGS): <http://www.cogs.umn.edu/>

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA) Grants: <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/gapsa/home/grants>

Thesis Research Travel Grants: [http://www.grad.umn.edu/funding\\_tuition/fellowships\\_grants/trg/index.html](http://www.grad.umn.edu/funding_tuition/fellowships_grants/trg/index.html)

U of M Job site (RA, TA, other positions): <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/employment/>

### **Forms /Procedures**

Graduate School: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/>

Gradshare: <http://www.gradshare.com>

Policies and Governance: [http://www.grad.umn.edu/deans-office/policies\\_governance/index.html](http://www.grad.umn.edu/deans-office/policies_governance/index.html)

Forms for Enrolled Students: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/forms/index.html>

Readmission: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/admissions/readmission/index.html>

Change of Status: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/admissions/cos/index.html>

Writing Studies Handbook: <http://writingstudies.umn.edu/grad/handbook.html>

### **Doctoral Degree and Degree Progress**

Information for Doctoral Students: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/doctoral/index.html>

Forms for Doctoral Students: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/forms/doctoral/index.html>

Writing Studies Department's Ph.D. Program Form F-2b (PDF): <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-2b.pdf>

Writing Studies Student Progress Reports F-1PhD: <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-1a.pdf>

### **Master's Degree and Degree Progress**

Information for Master's Students: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/masters/index.html>

Forms for Master's Students: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/forms/masters/index.html>

Writing Studies Department's M.A. Program Form F-2a (PDF): <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-2a.pdf>

Writing Studies Student Progress Reports F-1 M.A.: <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-1b.pdf>

### **Special Purpose:**

Special Registration Categories: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/registration/specialcategories/index.html#8444>

(Full-Time Status with One Credit Registration Application (Departmental use only):

[policy.umn.edu/forms/otr/otr195.pdf](http://policy.umn.edu/forms/otr/otr195.pdf)



Writ 8444 Advance Study Registration Instructions F-17 (PDF): <http://www.writ.umn.edu/assets/pdf/f-17.pdf>

**Interdisciplinary Initiatives:** <http://www.grad.umn.edu/deans-office/idinitiatives/index.html>

**International Programs/ Funding and Information:**

Fulbright Scholarship: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/fellowships/fulbright/index.html>

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS): <http://www.iss.umn.edu>

Luce Scholars Program: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/fellowships/luce/index.html>

**Listsers:**

Council of Writing Program Administrators: <http://wpacouncil.org/wpa-l>

Association of Internet Researchers: <http://aoir.org/email-list/>

Association of Teachers of Technical Writing: <http://www.attw.org/connect/listserv>

Writing Across the Curriculum: <http://www.lsoft.com/scripts/wl.exe?SL1=WAC-L&H=LISTSERV.ILLINOIS.EDU>

TechRhet: <http://www.intervarsity.org/lists/techrhet/subscribe.html>

**Organizations, Graduate Student**

GAPSA: Graduate and Professional Student Assembly: <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/gapsa/home/about-us>

COGS: Council of Graduate Students: <http://www.cogs.umn.edu/>

**Organizations, Professional**

ATTW: Association of Teachers of Technical Writing: <http://www.attw.org/>

CCCC: *Conference on College Composition and Communication*: <http://www.ncte.org/cccc>

MLA: Modern Language Association: <http://www.mla.org/>

RSA: Rhetoric Society of America: [http://associationdatabase.com/aws/RSA/pt/sp/Home\\_Page](http://associationdatabase.com/aws/RSA/pt/sp/Home_Page)

**Research**

Charles Babbage Institute (CBI): <http://www.cbi.umn.edu/>

Digital Arts Sciences + Humanities (DASH): [z.umn.edu/dashdiss](http://z.umn.edu/dashdiss)

Lynda Software Training and Tutorials: <http://www.lynda.com/member.aspx>

Research Resources: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/professional-development/writersnexus/ResearchResources/index.html>

Thesis Formatting and Submission: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/ThesisSubmission/index.html>

Writers Nexus: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/professional-development/writersnexus/index.html>

Writing Studies Librarian: <https://www.lib.umn.edu/subjects/rqs/185>